

REMARKS

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the allowance of claim 34 and for the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 3-19, 21-23, 25-33, 36, and 37. Applicant has amended the application accordingly, putting the application in condition for allowance. Specifically, Applicant has (i) cancelled claims 1, 2, 20, 24, 35, and 38-51, and (ii) amended claims 3, 4, 7, 8, 18, 21, 25-27, 36, and 37 to put these claims in independent form and to include the recitations of the claims of the rejected independent claim from which they depend and any intervening claims. The remaining allowable claims depend from one of the amended allowable claims and do not need to be amended. Applicant has not added any claims.

Claims 1, 2, 20, 24, 35, and 38-51 stand rejected under either 35 U.S.C. § 102 or § 103(a). In light of the cancellation of all of these claims, these rejections are moot.

It is believed that all of the pending claims have been addressed. However, the absence of a reply to a specific rejection, issue, or comment, including the Office Action's characterizations of the art, does not signify agreement with or concession of that rejection, issue, or comment. In addition, because Applicant has put the application in condition for allowance to expedite prosecution, there may be reasons for patentability of any or all pending claims (or other claims) that have not been expressed. Finally, nothing in this paper should be construed as an intent to concede any issue with regard to any claim, except as specifically stated in this paper, and the amendment or cancellation of any claim does not necessarily signify concession of unpatentability of the claim prior to its amendment or cancellation. Applicant reserves the right to prosecute the rejected claims in further prosecution of this or related applications.

Applicant submitted an Information Disclosure Statement and Form PTO-1449 on November 12, 2004, and requests that the Examiner initial the references on the page of the Form PTO-1449 and return the 1449 to Applicant.

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Enclosed is a \$1,600 check for excess claim fees. Please apply any other charges or credits to deposit account 06-1050.

Respectfully submitted,

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